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*The Situation.*

CAPE TOWN:  
THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

—  
1900.





S P E E C H \*

DELIVERED BY

MR. ADVOCATE WESSELS

\* ON THE OCCASION OF THE

INAUGURATION OF THE PAARL BRANCH

OF THE

GUILD OF LOYAL WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA.

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6TH JUNE, 1900.

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CAPE TOWN:  
THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

1900.



## INTRODUCTION.

THE Africanders in South Africa may be roughly divided into three political classes—1. The Africanders descended from English ancestors. These have a strong attachment to the Empire and no desire to break away from it. 2. Africanders descended from Dutch or Huguenot ancestors, who, like the English Africanders, are anxious that South Africa should form part of the Empire. These may be shortly designated as loyal Dutch Africanders. 3. Africanders springing from Dutch and Huguenot forefathers, who are anxious to establish a United South Africa entirely free from British rule. Many people identify the Bond party with this class, though I think this too sweeping a statement. It is difficult to form an accurate estimate of the exact number of heads under each class, though I think that the combination of the English Africander and the Dutch loyal Africander considerably exceeds the disloyal portion. The disloyal portion clearly show through their newspapers that the liberty of the individual is no concern of theirs, and most assuredly no plank in their platform. They hate with a bitter hatred everybody who is not of their way of thinking, and they would impose their rule upon their fellows, not by persuasion, but by brute force. To them the Mauser is a holy symbol. They have no desire to see South Africa a country peopled by free men. Their aspirations are to pull down the British Flag, to impose the Dutch language on all, and to establish a reign of barbaric terror. They prate loudly of the liberty of the Press, but, judging by the past, they would suppress every anti-revolutionary paper. They deprecate force, but rely for argument and conciliation on the Mauser and the Krupp gun. They howl at the idea of British annexation, but would have freely annexed without a qualm of conscience any British territory that they were strong enough to hold. They wail over the bloodshed which they themselves have caused, but openly gloat over the number of British Soldiers they have slain and the number of South African homes they have made desolate. They feed and batten on race hatred. Their Christian Charity does not extend beyond their own narrow clique. They abuse the liberty of English rule and make of that liberty a licence. We are therefore face to face with this problem. Are we going to allow these people to prevail? Are we going to



allow them to cut us adrift from the Empire and expose South Africa to the attack of some other Power with which these people would readily conclude an alliance if it were only to wreak their vengeance against the British?

If we are going to allow this then we may bid Freedom farewell. When one hears some of these people talk about their forefathers, one would imagine that the English took away their Freedom. They forget that the rule of the Dutch East India Company was a tyranny of no mean order and they forget that the Cape was handed over to Great Britain by solemn treaty.

It is high time, therefore, that English Africanders and Loyal Dutch Africanders stand together and oppose in solid phalanx the onslaught of those of our countrymen who long to establish over us a rule of Red Terror.

It was with the object of voicing the views of those Dutch Africanders who fear the threatened tyranny that I delivered the following address.

J. W. WESSELS.

## MR. ADVOCATE WESSELS' SPEECH.

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I HARDLY thought when as a schoolboy I spent my holidays in your beautiful town I would one day be asked to address you on the subject of loyalty to the Crown. In those days there was little, if any, race hatred. One never heard of those visionaries who speak of an independent South Africa free from all British control. In those days everything was peace and happiness. Without peace there could be no happiness, and without happiness life was not worth living in any country. If I should be somewhat serious this morning, I feel sure the ladies will forgive me. The subject is such that it will not permit of any but serious treatment. I know that seriousness in a speaker is by many regarded as a great bore, but the subject will not bear much levity. As I understand the Guild, it was the intention of those that founded it that the women of South Africa should influence their children in such a way that these would firmly understand that it was an honour and advantage to be a citizen of the British Empire. (Applause.) When I ask you to consider it an honour to belong to the British Empire, I would not for one moment suggest that it is a disgrace to be an Africander. On the contrary, I would ask you to be proud of the fact that you are Africanders, and never to attempt to pose as Englishwomen, for when we Africanders attempt this we only make ourselves contemptible. (Hear, hear) There are two cardinal precepts that I would have you bear constantly in your minds. The first is that an Africander is every whit as good as an Englishman, and the second is that an Englishman is every whit as good as an Africander. (Applause.) I am an Africander, and I am proud of it. I am proud of the fact that I have Dutch, French, and German blood in my veins. This is just the very reason why I respect the Englishman's pride of birth. We have every right to be as proud of our ancestors as the English have to be proud of theirs. (Hear, hear.) There is, however, one bad quality which has become very prevalent amongst us Africanders, and that is the quality of conceit. It is especially noticeable in the rising generation of Africanders. I would not have you think for one moment that the Englishman is void of this vice, but I think that the young Africander is aggressively conceited where he

has but little reason to be so. The young Africander reminds me of the fable of the frog that felt so confident that it could rival the bull in size, that it blew itself up until it burst. The young Africander states have tried to rival Great Britain as a military power, and like the old Greek's frog they have also burst. (Laughter and applause.) The young Africanders in the Transvaal and Free State gradually came to believe that they knew everything better and could do everything better than any Englishman. They thought that because they, or rather their fathers, could hit a bottle at 200 yards there was no limit to their capacities. Straight shooting became to them the be-all and end-all of virtue. (Laughter.) Education, culture, industry, commerce and skill in good government were as nothing compared with skill in hitting the bottle. (Renewed laughter.) To suggest to the young Africander that he was not omniscient and omnipotent was to be a traitor to one's race. To tell the Kruger oligarchy at Pretoria that it was quite impossible to prevent the active and intelligent majority of the community from obtaining a voice in the future government of the State, was enough to be jeered at and called a fool. They were strong enough to control that, and "om die Engelsche uit die land te schiet." To tell them that it was quite impossible for them to withstand the might of the Empire if they provoked the British so as to come to blows, was sufficient to show yourself a coward. To criticise the Africander and show him that his inflated ideas were foolish was a natural offence. Yet that same class of Africander would listen with rapturous delight if Mr. Ernest Hargrove painted his own people as blood-thirsty tyrants. To hear an Englishman deny his countrymen and say that the Empire was going to ruin because it would not listen to the Bond, met with violent applause; but for an Africander, one of themselves, to point out their folly and to caution them that if they persisted in their foolish course, ruin would stare them in the face, was a sin that merited the contempt of every Africander. This conceit had brought ruin to many a Transvaal, Free State and Colonial home. I beg and pray of you to teach your children to be proud of their race and teach them that they are quite as good as others, but do not teach them that they are better. Conceit is born of ignorance, and ignorance is the best and surest guide to utter perdition. Widen the range of your children's knowledge and teach the young Africanders to look beyond the Limpopo to the broad world, where Anglo-Saxons, Germans, Frenchmen and Russians are in constant rivalry to civilise mankind. When he begins to realise what goes on in the wide world he will feel proud



that he is a British subject—a subject of perhaps the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. (Hear, hear). He will see that, go where he will, he may meet with the scowl of jealousy, the glare of hatred, but never with the shrug of contempt. (Loud applause.) Why is that? The complete answer is interesting but extremely complex. This great fact he will, however, quickly notice. Millions of British subjects are ruled in divers parts of the world with an army which compared with those of even the smaller European States is insignificant. If he be wise he will ask himself how is this huge Empire able to maintain itself with so small an army? How is it that over these large and populous tracts of country the Empire requires so small an army to maintain the Pax Britannica? In Germany and the other great States of Europe there are millions of soldiers to maintain the social order, and consequently militarism is rampant. In the British Isles and wherever there is British rule the social order is maintained by an almost insignificant army. The British Empire is thus not ruled by force, but by something else. What is that something else? There can be no doubt that this something else is the British love of freedom. (Applause.) Wherever the British flag floated there we find equality and tolerance. (Hear, hear.) No part of the Empire feels the goad of tyranny; there is therefore no inducement to break away; hence no large army is required to compel obedience and maintain the integrity of the Empire. On the contrary, so jealous is each State of the national honour, and so keen to secure the safety and integrity of the Empire, that directly one member is threatened we see the whole world in commotion, and we see citizens rushing to its aid from the icy regions of Canada to the sunny plains of Australia. The British Empire differs from the Empires of old and from those of to-day in that it has been built up not so much by conquest as by a peaceful, industrial and commercial expansion. No Alexander, no Caesar, no Napoleon founded the British Empire. France, Spain, and Holland possessed not very long ago Empires nearly as great, if not as great, as the present British Empire. Where are their Empires now? How was it that Great Britain had maintained her Empire whilst the other nations had lost nearly all their vast extra-European possessions. The chief reason is because the British Empire had never been exploited for the benefit of a certain class or clique in Great Britain, but for the benefit of all. If to-day the noblest and wealthiest peer of the realm were to land in Table Bay, from the moment he set foot on Colonial soil he had no greater rights in this Colony than you or I. (Applause.) Each state or colony of the British Empire

ruled itself, and was master of its own destinies within its own sphere. A Canadian had no right to interfere in the affairs of Australia; an Australian had nothing to say in the Cape Colony, and the Cape Colonist had the right to control the affairs of the Cape Colony. Beyond the borders of the Cape Colony he had no right of controlling the policy of the whole Empire. (Hear, hear.) Within the limits of this Colony the voice of the majority in the Legislature is the voice of the people for the time being. The Bond, for instance, is at present the ruling party in this Colony. Unfortunately, the Bond is not satisfied with having supreme power in this Colony, it desires to rule the whole of South Africa. Such is its conceit and ambition, that it deems this insufficient and seeks to rule not only South Africa but the whole Empire. It is to my mind a curious phenomenon to hear the Bond shouting that the whole British Empire is going to ruin because Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, Canadians, Indians, Australians and the larger part of South Africa do not agree with their wild hallucinations. (Hear, hear.) Excuse this digression. I think you will agree with me that the British Empire is *sui generis*, that it does not hang together by force, that its watchword is Political Equality, Freedom of thought and Freedom of speech, and that under its wide shield every man is the master of his own destiny.

There is one other important fact. It is a fact very often overlooked, but it is, nevertheless, to my mind, very important. The British Empire is composed of men of all nationalities. It is a Cosmopolitan Empire. Men of French, Dutch, English, Scotch, Irish, and Asiatic descent are all embraced within its wide folds. Being, therefore, an agglomerate of nations and races there is no reason for any one to feel that his national pride is being trampled on. Everyone's language is respected and no one is interfered with in his religion, whilst every member has a voice in public affairs. (Applause.) Take Germany, Russia or any large European power, and what do we find? The Germans had conquered and partitioned Poland, they had annexed Schleswig-Holstein and wrested from France, Alsace and Lorraine. In all these conquered territories the inhabitants were compelled by order of the Kaiser to think and speak in German. You could not even dare to sell on the market a pound of butter in the Danish language. German alone is the language of the Parliament, the public offices and the schools.

Most people wanted some material advantage for their loyalty. The subjects of the British Empire have the advantage of a ready protection wheresoever they might be. No region was so remote that the arm of the Empire could not reach it. Great Britain has

so great a navy that she can always see that law and order is maintained and that no foreign nation dare trample on the rights of her subjects. *Ons Land* has this morning come out boldly with its policy. It wants the complete independence of South Africa. The British Flag shall no longer protect its shores or at the most it may obtain the voluntary concession of a right to protect. But do these people realize what the position of the Cape would be if it were not a portion of the British Empire? Do they know that it would be exposed to the first naval power that came along, and that it is not impossible to conceive that the shrieking members of the Bond might become the subjects of some Asiatic sea power like Japan. (Laughter and applause.) It was therefore not only an honour; it was an advantage to be a member of the British Empire. Can you understand how anyone could wish to exchange his right of British citizenship for the privilege of being ruled over by President Kruger and his family? Advisedly I add his family, for anyone intimate with political life in the Transvaal would know that the family of Paul Kruger had a greater influence there than the grandsons of the Queen have in the territories of the British Empire. To many there is a fascination in the word "Republic." They think you have but to baptise any form of Government with the name "Republic," and then Freedom immediately sets her throne there. Unwise men! If they will make themselves acquainted with the history of Venice and the Italian Republics, they will soon find that the word "Republic" does not always spell Freedom. If by Republic we mean political equality, freedom of thought and freedom of language and religion, then the British Empire is verily the greatest Republic in the world, and its Sovereign its permanent president. (Applause.) But, ladies, if by Republic we mean a narrow and selfish oligarchy, then heaven defend us from Republics.

I do not wish to vex you with present-day politics, but one cannot help referring, though cursorily, to the controversial politics of the day. Had it not been for the conceit of the young Transvaaler and the young Free Stater, their ignorance, blindness and obstinacy, we should not have seen South Africa bathed in blood, and we should not have seen two Republics cease to exist. You have heard how the members of the Bond Congress at Graaff-Reinet regret the war. I do not believe that they can regret the war more than I do. I did all in my power to persuade the oligarchy at Pretoria to cease to be a family party and to allow the Uitlander, who contributed so much to the State and whom they had to thank for their welfare, to have some voice in the government of the Republic, so that the Transvaal might



cease to be an oligarchy and become a Republic in deed as well as in word. I begged them to give the Uitlander an honest and satisfactory five-year franchise, and so to satisfy the Uitlander's sense of justice. What was their reply? They called me a traitor to my race—a man whom his relations would not own. Thank God, this part of their prediction has not been fulfilled. I tried to persuade them that war with Great Britain was suicidal, and that when the first shot was fired the independence of both republics would be gone. The *Volksstem*, the Government organ, told me that I was a fool, and that I knew nothing of the might of these young Republics. It was not only the Boer of the back country that thought the Africander invincible. A most intelligent man, a friend of mine, wrote to me from the Boer camp that they were sure of victory, and that many of them had vowed not to wash until they reached the Indian Ocean. Nay, he would even visit me in Cape Town. The worst feature of all this is that they really believed that their hopes would be fulfilled. Shortly before I left there was a feeling rampant in young Transvaal that they would sweep the British into the sea and compel the officials at Cape Town to speak Cape Dutch. Every young Africander was polishing his Mauser and openly boasting "dat hij gaat Engelsche schiet." He thought that as he could shoot straight—though many cannot even do this—he would soon be in Cape Town. (Laughter.) Was not the god of the Transvaal greater than the god of the British Empire? I have some relations and many friends fighting on the side of the Transvaal. I am sorry that their conceit and ignorance led them to take up arms, but I feel that they were misled by Kruger and that archfiend Leyds. (Hear, hear.) After the victory at Amajuba the young Transvaaler came to regard himself a far better man than an Englishman. The Hollander Leyds persuaded them that through his skill and cleverness as a diplomat the Transvaal had become the most important spot on the face of the globe. The German and French concessionaries were never weary of impressing upon the members of the Raad that England was an effete Power, and that they loved the Transvaal with more than brotherly love. All Europe would rush to the assistance of the young Republic directly it resolved to throw off the British yoke. They smiled at the unfortunate Boer and said, "aap wat is jy een mooie jongen." And yet when the war came what do we see? The German Emperor hastens to congratulate the Queen and tell her that his heart was always with the British Army. (Applause.) The people who in their conceit and ignorance thought they could shake the foundations of the British Empire, make it totter and

fall, only succeed in overthrowing the independence of two Republics. The Bond regrets the loss of the Republics' independence. I, who lived in the Transvaal and knew it well, regret that loss far more than they. I know what happy, contented and prosperous countries those two Republics could have been made under a Government with wide views imbued with a true feeling for freedom; under a Government that did not intrigue against British interests with Germany, France and Holland; under a government that honestly endeavoured to carry out the obligations of the convention, and that did not try at every turn to circumvent British Statesmen; under a government that sought the friendship and did not do everything in its power to rouse the enmity of the British nation. Oh, what a country it might have been under a President like the late John Brand! Had the Transvaal recognised the fact that an Africander is as good as an Englishman, but no better, then the bitter race hatred would have disappeared and the Republics would still have had their independence. This wretched idea that the Transvaal was a first class power because they shot straight at Amajuba had spread even to the Cape Colony. Did not a member of your Parliament consider that 50,000 British Soldiers were but a breakfast for the young giant. And because this feeling spread Cape Colonists were also anxious to take part in the onslaught against the tottering Empire. Now, ladies, though I regret the ignorance, blindness and obstinacy that led the Transvaaler and Free Stater to declare war on Great Britain, I can understand and appreciate his aspiration to acquire for his country by his own right hand complete and full independence. I feel profoundly the misery that has been caused alike to South African and English mothers. Yet when I think of the battles that have been fought, though I feel bitterly sorry that ever a shot was fired, I feel proud that my countrymen are no cowards. (Applause). As I respect the Englishman, so would I that the Englishman should respect the Africander. (Applause.) When, however, I come to think of the rebels in this Colony, I cannot understand how their leaders could have been guilty of such wrong and of such folly as to take up arms against the rest of South Africa. I feel indignant that these men could have led their misguided brothers into such misery. I feel no vindictiveness against the bulk of the rebels, for they were but the sheep that followed the goats. The victorious Transvaal would drive the English to the sea and they too would join in the procession. Though they were guilty of a foolish crime, they at any rate came out boldly into the open light of day, risked their lives and took

the consequences. But, ladies, when I come to think of that other crowd of Africanders who skulk in the twilight and whose courage is mere insolence, men who, secure in person and in property, sit behind the British lines of defence, and from there urge on the poor Transvaalers, Free Staters and insurgents to continue the struggle for their own personal benefit, then words fail me to express my loathing and contempt. (Applause.) Their newspapers exaggerate British losses, sneer at British arms, cast grave doubts on British successes in order to buoy up the Republican hopes; they exaggerate the spread of the flames of rebellion, and promise moral support with an empty word. But would these men risk their lives? No. (Applause.) At the most they will send a few sons across the borders and risk the lives of a few children. Go teach your children to bewail and respect those Africanders who fought and died for a hopeless cause, but to despise and condemn those others who, secure under the aegis of British protection, urged on their misguided brothers to die in the last ditch. (Applause.) Why were these leaders so anxious to join the Republican cause? Because they thought it would benefit them. If all South Africa were one Dutch Republic, think of all the available government billets. The glamour of the wealth and power of the Pretoria oligarchy had crushed out their better reason.

Much as I dislike extension of empire by conquest or annexation, I feel that the matter has gone so far that British sentiment could not be appeased by anything short of annexation. Moreover, it seems to me that the peace of South Africa would be in constant danger if the Republics were allowed to carry on their former hostile existence. The Bond at Graaff-Reinet says if you do annex there will also be evil. If then this evil must and will prevail whether there is annexation or no, then surely the better policy is to choose that evil which can most easily be held under control—and that undoubtedly means annexation. If Sir Alfred Milner should wish to justify his policy, he need but point to the rebel districts and the Graaff-Reinet Congress. The speeches there delivered will furnish Lord Salisbury with ample proof of the danger with which the Republics threatened South Africa. The speeches of the members of Parliament at that congress transcended those of their humbler brothers in idiocy, and offer the strongest possible plea for annexation. These people say if you annex the Republics, the whole of South Africa will hate you, but they forget to say that they were all standing on the tip toe of expectation that the Republics would be successful, and then they would have shouted Republicanism as loudly as they now



shriek out their fear that annexation spells ruin to the Empire. They display a solicitude for the safety of the Empire one would never have given them credit for. (Laughter.) Did these men warn the Republics after the Bloemfontein Conference that if they did not give the five years' franchise, the Republics might sacrifice their independence? I never heard of that voice of warning. It was the old story of watching the proverbial cat jump. Unfortunately the animal jumped on the wrong side, and that is the reason for all this bluster and threatening and gnashing of teeth.

Ladies, I will conclude by again asking you to teach your children to be proud of their race, proud of their country and proud of the fact that they are members of the British Empire, but I will also ask you to teach your children to loathe and despise those who sow the seeds of sedition, those who fan the flames of race hatred and who, to satisfy their envy and vindictiveness, their hatred and ambition, would wish to make of this fair Country a veritable Hell on Earth. (Loud applause).

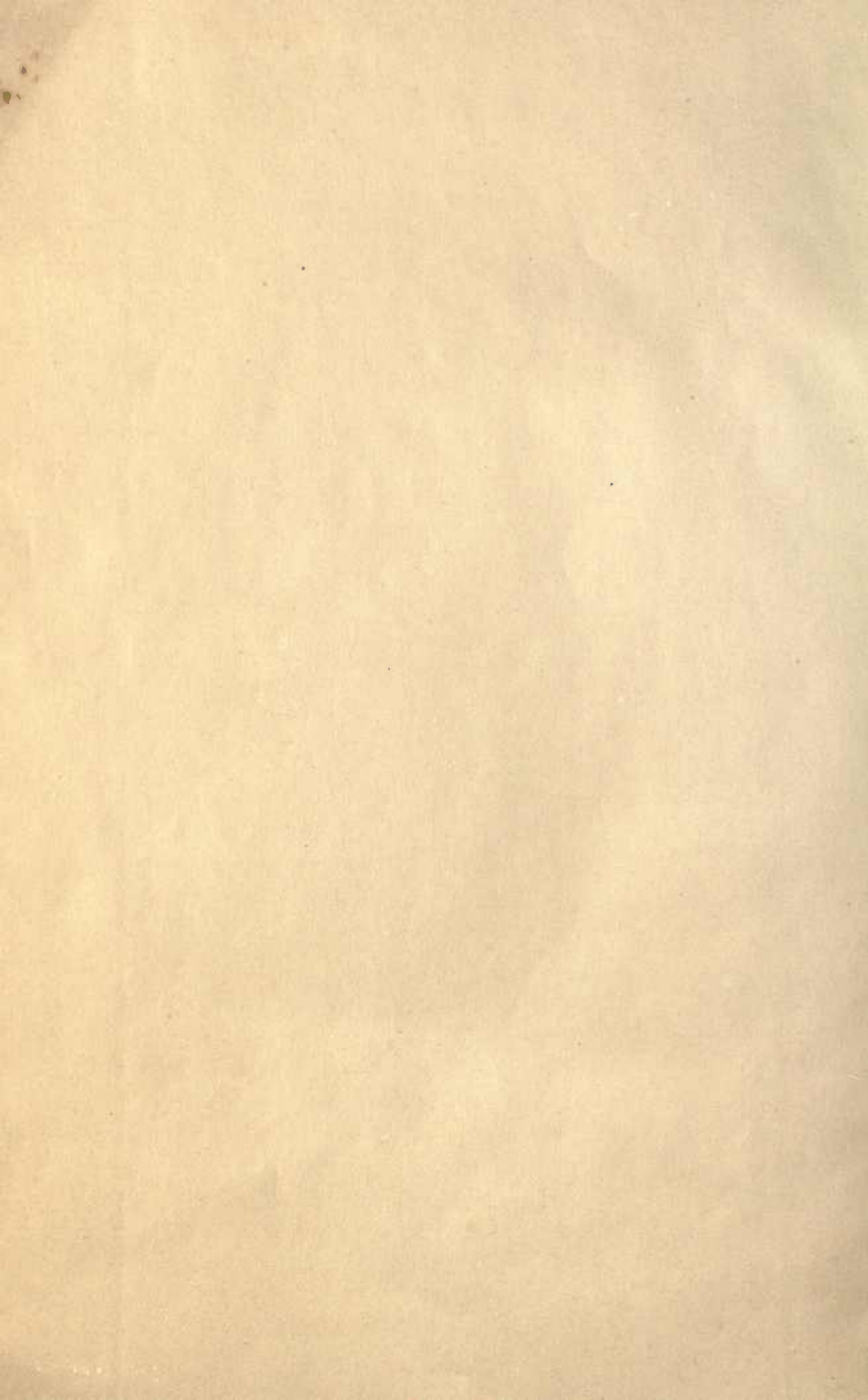
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# THE SOUTH AFRICAN Vigilance Committee.

## LIST OF EXECUTIVE.

Abrahamson, L.  
 Anderson, T. J., M.L.A.  
 Arderne H. M.  
 Bailey, Amos, M.L.A.  
 His Worship the Mayor of Cape Town  
 (Mr. Councillor T. Ball)  
 Brown, J. L. M., M.L.A.  
 Brydone, R. R.  
 Buissinne, W. T.  
 Cartwright, J. D., M.L.A.  
 Cloete, Henry, C.M.G.  
 Cloete, Louis  
 Ebdon, Hon. Alfred  
 Fairbridge, W. G.  
 Faure, Hon. Sir Pieter, K.C.M.G., M.L.A.  
 Frost, Hon. J., M.L.A., C.M.G.  
 Fuller, T. E., M.L.A.  
 Gill, Sir David, K.C.B., LL.D., F.R.S.  
 Graham, Hon. T. L., Q.C., M.L.C.  
 Hewat, Dr. M.  
 Hewat, Dr. J.  
 Jagger, J. W.

Juta, Hon. Sir H., Q.C., M.L.A.  
 McClure, Rev. J. J.  
 Moffat, Rev. J. S., C.M.G.  
 Nuttall, Rev. E.  
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 Powell, Edmund  
 Runciman, W., M.L.A.  
 Schermbrucker, Col., M.L.A.  
 Schreiner, Theo.  
 Smartt, Hon. Dr., M.L.A.  
 Smuts, Dr., M.L.A.  
 Solomon, R. Stuart  
 Sprigg, Right Hon. Sir J. Gordon,  
 K.C.M.G., M.L.A.  
 St. Leger, F. Y., M.L.A.  
 Steytler, E. S.  
 Struben, H. W.  
 Trollip, Gus  
 Weil, Julius, M.L.A.  
 Van Zyl, C. H.  
 Zietsman, L., M.L.A.

CHAIRMAN: Right Hon. Sir J. Gordon Sprigg, K.C.M.G., M.L.A.

HON. TREASURERS: L. Abrahamson and R. Stuart Solomon.

SECRETARY: William H. Low, M.A.

## SOUTH AFRICAN

# Vigilance Committee.

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The Committee seeks to achieve the following objects :—

- (1.) To collect and focus the views of all sections of South African citizens who are convinced of the essential justice of Sir Alfred Milner's Policy.
- (2.) To set forth to the British public the necessity for the prosecution of the present war to a thoroughly successful termination.
- (3.) To make it clear to the citizens of the Empire in the United Kingdom and in the Colonies that the continuance of the Independence of the Republican States in any form must endanger the permanent settlement and peaceful progress of South Africa, and would lead to greater trouble than any we have hitherto experienced.
- (4.) To counteract misleading statements made by the anti-British Press or by the emissaries or supporters of the Republics in favour of any settlement short of annexation.
- (5.) To organise public demonstrations, at suitable times and in suitable places, in support of the policy for the incorporation of the Republics in the British Empire.
- (6.) To supply literature to the various political organizations in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, and to disseminate information among our Dutch fellow-Colonists as to the aim and scope of British policy.
- (7.) To raise a fund to be called the South African Imperial Defence Fund, to be used solely for the promotion of the above object. No portion of the Fund shall be available for contested elections or for any political party purposes in South Africa.